

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN JO 01029 112058Z  
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
ARAE-00 /056 W  
-----112105Z 130882 /73

P 112021Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6685

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 1029

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CS  
SUBJECT: PRIMARY ELECTIONS IN COSTA RICA - THE JOSE FIGUERES ROLE

REF: A) SAN JOSE A-05, B) SAN JOSE A-10

1. SUMMARY: AS THE COUNTDOWN TO PRIMARY ELECTION DAY  
(MARCH 13) BEGINS, JOSE FIGUERES HAS UNEXPECTEDLY RE-  
ASSERTED HIMSELF AS A GOVERNMENT PARTY POWER STILL TO BE  
RECKONED WITH. HIS NEW ROLE: PARTY CONCILIATOR. END  
SUMMARY.

2. COSTA RICA IS GEARED UP IN PREPARATION FOR THE  
MARCH 13 PRIMARY ELECTION IN BOTH THE GOVERNMENT PARTY  
PLN AND THE OPPOSITION. FROM THE FIELD OF TWO IN EACH  
CAMP, ONE WILL EMERGE CANDIDATE FOR THE 1978 PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTION, WHICH IS 11 MONTHS AWAY. COSTA RICA IS AP-  
PROACHING THIS PRIMARY--THE FIRST IN ITS HISTORY--IN THE  
SAME TRADITIONAL CIVIC SPIRIT AS A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.  
ACCORDINGLY, IN THESE LAST DAYS BEFORE MARCH 13, THE  
COUNTRY IS LIVING AND BREATHING POLITICS (REFS A  
AND B).

3. FORMER PRESIDENT JOSE FIGUERES HAS MADE NEWS DUR-  
ING THE PAST WEEK BY BREAKING HIS POLITICAL SILENCE  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN JO 01029 112058Z

(FOLLOWING FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALO FACIO'S DEPARTURE  
FROM THE RACE IN JANUARY) WITH A CONCILIATORY CALL  
FOR THE PARTY UNITY BEHIND WHICHEVER THE TWO PLN CANDI-  
DATES EMERGES VICTORIOUS. ON NATIONAL TELEVISION  
MARCH 8 AND MARCH 10, FIGUERES URGED PARTY TO SUPPORT  
EITHER SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS ALBERTO MONGE (THE  
RECOGNIZED FRONTRUNNER IN THE RACE) OR EX-MINISTER

OF AGRICULTURE HERNAN GARRON. FIGUERES DESCRIBED THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES OF THE TWO AS LEFT AND CONSERVATIVE RESPECTIVELY WITHIN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT BQI# POLITICAL PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE GOVERNMENT

PARTY, BUT UNDERLINED THAT NEITHER IS EXTREME IN HIS VIEWS. BY REFUSING TO ENDORSE EITHER ONE, AND CALLING FOR A FUTURE CO-GOVERNMENT OF THE IDEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES IN A 1978-82 PLN ADMINISTRATION, FIGUERES HAS PROJECTED THE IMAGE THE PARTY PATRIARCH WHO IS KEEPING HIMSELF ABOVE THE FRAY AND WHOSE ROLE IS CONCILIATOR. THIS CONTRASTS DIRECTLY TO FEARS IN THE GOVERNMENT PARTY THAT A DISGRUNTLED FIGUERES, WHO HAS BEEN POLITICALLY THWARTED WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY DURING THE LAST YEAR, WOULD SPLIT AWAY AND PRESENT HIS OWN CANDIDATE.

4.FIGUERES SAID HIS CONCERN WAS THAT THE WINNER WILL NOT SUPPORT THE LOSER OF THE PARTY PRIMARY. FIGUERES HAS PROPOSED THAT LOSING CANDIDATE BE PROMPTED A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE NOMINEE'S ADMINISTRATION, AND HAS EMPHASIZED THAT PARTICIPATION OF BOTH TENDENCIES IN THE NEXT PLN ADMINISTRATION IS THE KEY TO PLN UNITY. FIGUERES UNDERLINED HIS COMMITMENT TO PARTY CONCILIATION BY NOTING THAT HE IS MENDING FENCES WITH DANIEL ODUBER, WITH WHOM HE ADMITTED HE HAD BEEN AT ODDS IN THE PAST. FIGUERES DISMISSED CORRUPTION CHARGES BY SAYING HE FEARED NO INVESTI-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN JO 01029 112058Z

GATIONS, AND IN FACT WOULD WELCOME THEM.

5. COMMENT: COSTA RICA WAS WAITING FOR JOSE FIGUERES TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION, AND ONCE AGAIN HE CAUGHT THE COUNTRY OFFGUARD. NO ONE EXPECTED HIM TO BE AS CONCILIATORY AS HE HAS BEEN. FIGUERES' MOVE IS A SKILLFUL POLITICAL PLOY TO RE-ESTABLISH HIS PRESTIGE IN THE PARTY, TO REASSERT HIS POSITION AS A PLN LEADER, TO KEEP DANIEL ODUBER ON NOTICE THAT HE IS STILL A POLITICAL PWER TO BE RECKONED WITH, AND TO MAKE HIS INFLUENCE AS CONCILIATOR FELT IN THE CAMPAIGN AND IN A FUTURE PLN GOVERNMENT. FIGUERES HAS DEMONSTRATED ANEW WHY HE HAS BEEN THE LEADING POLITICAL FIGURE IN COSTA RICA OVER THE PAST THREE DECADES. KILDAY

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PARTY LEADERS, NATIONAL ELECTIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 11-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977SANJO01029  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770085-0043  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** SAN JOSE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19770368/aaaacieg.tel  
**Line Count:** 115  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 7cc1bab9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 SAN JOSE A-5, 77 SAN JOSE A-10  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 11-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3134325  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PRIMARY ELECTIONS IN COSTA RICA - THE JOSE FIGUERES ROLE  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PGOV, PINT, CS, (FIGUERES, JOSE)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/7cc1bab9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009